

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 OIC-02 SS-15 SP-02 L-03

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, KS, OAS

SUBJECT: ROK INTEREST IN OAS OBSERVER STATUS

REF: SEOUL 5640

1. MINISTER CHOONG WHAY KOO OF ROK EMBASSY CALLED AT U.S. MISSION TO THE OAS (USOAS) JULY 28 TO DISCUSS ROK INTEREST IN PERMANENT OBSERVER STATUS AT THE OAS. HE REQUESTED U.S. SUPPORT FOR ROK APPLICATION AND USOAS ASSESSMENT OF ITS CHANCES.

2. WE TOLD KOO BESTOWAL OF PERMANENT OBSERVER STATUS IS DECISION BY MAJORITY VOTE OF OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO CONSIDER DEGREE OF REQUESTING STATE'S PARTICIPATION IN OAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. KOO SAID ROK WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ANY SUCH PROGRAMS, ALTHOUGH IT HAD EXTENSIVE BI-

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LATERAL RELATIONS WITH OAS MEMBERS INCLUDING SOME TECHNICAL

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND CULTURAL AND STUDENT EXCHANGES.
HE SAID ROK WOULD BE WILLING TO CHANNEL SUCH ACTIVITIES
THROUGH THE OAS IF THIS WERE A CONDITION OF PERMANENT OBSER-
VER STATUS.

3. USOAS TOLD KOO DEPT WOULD NEED TO ASSESS LIKELY PERMA--
NENT COUNCIL REACTION TO ROK OBSERVER CANDIDACY AND PROMISED
TO BE BACK TO KOO WITH OUR VIEWS SHORTLY.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH OAS SECRETARIAT OFFI-
CIAL (HOWARD SALZMAN), USOAS LEARNED ROK EMBASSY HAD AL-
READY MADE PRELIMINARY APPROACH TO SECRETARIAT AND THAT
KOO HAS REQUESTED APPOINTMENT WITH SECGEN ALEJANDRO ORFILA
TO PURSUE SUBJECT. IN SALZMAN'S VIEW, ROK JUSTIFICATION
FOR REQUESTED STATUS IS WEAK BECAUSE OF ABSENCE OF ANY
PRIOR SUPPORT FOR OAS ACTIVITIES.

5. SALZMAN CITED CASE OF EGYPT, HOWEVER, POINTING OUT THAT
THIS YEAR EGYPT HAD UNDERTAKEN A "VERY GENEROUS" COMMIT-
MENT, PUTTING UP MOST OF THE FUNDS FOR AN OAS TECHNICAL
TRAINING PROGRAM INVOLVING SOME 80 STUDENTS. AS A RESULT
HE FELT THE COUNCIL WOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THE
EGYPTIAN REQUEST FOR PERMANENT OBSERVER STATUS, "BUT
NEXT YEAR, AFTER THE TRAINING PROGRAM HAS BEEN IN
OPERATION." HE IMPLIED ROK MIGHT BE ABLE TO FOLLOW SIMILAR
APPROACH: (FYI. AT PRESENT TIME JAPAN IS ONLY ASIAN STATE
WITH REGULAR OBSERVER STATUS.)

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PARTICIPATION IN OAS PROGRAMS IS THE
CRITERION THE ORGANIZATION IS SUPPOSED TO APPLY IN DETER-
MINING PERMANENT OBSERVER STATUS, POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS
ARE CLEARLY JUST AS IMPORTANT. FOR EXAMPLE, PORTUGAL'S
REQUEST FOR THIS STATUS LANGUISHED FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS,
THEN WAS DUSTED OFF AND APPROVED PROMPTLY AFTER THE 1974
REVOLUTION. A REPUBLIC OF CHINA APPLICATION FOR OBSER-
VER STATUS HAS NOT BEEN HEARD OF SINCE IT WAS REFERRED TO
COMMITTEE OVER A YEAR AGO. WE ARE PRESENTLY CONSIDERING
OUR RESPONSE TO ROK APPROACH AND WILL INFORM EMBASSY OF
FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. INGERSOLL

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